



Secretary Brancel Issues June Dairy Month Message

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Ben Brancel issued this message today in honor of June Dairy Month:

Wisconsin has much to be proud of this June Dairy Month as we reflect on the strong history and dynamic future of our state's dairy industry. From the red barns and modern structures dotting the Wisconsin landscape to the methane digesters converting animal waste to green energy, our state's dairy industry has continued to modernize and innovate to be competitive.

There is no other state that has the infrastructure, support network, and resources available to dairy producers like that of Wisconsin. As residents, we benefit from the 1.26 million cows on over 12,000 dairy farms that call Wisconsin home, as every cow in our state generates over \$20,000 in annual economic activity. Many other businesses rely on these dairy farms to be successful including veterinarians, nutritionists, educators, and manufacturers. Wisconsin's dairy industry generates \$26.5 billion in economic impact annually and accounts for more than 146,000 jobs.

Wisconsin produced over 26 billion pounds of milk in 2010, breaking the all-time record production of 25 billion pounds set in 1988. While our cows and dairy industry are successful producing high-quality milk, what processors and cheese makers do with our milk puts us a step above the rest.

Wisconsin has over 600 types, styles, and varieties of cheeses that are sold around the world. Our over 1,200 licensed cheesemakers make a quarter of the nation's cheese, ranking Wisconsin as the top cheese producing state. Additionally, Wisconsin is the leading producer of specialty cheese, producing 552 million pounds last year or 21 percent of Wisconsin's total cheese production. Our cheese also wins more awards than any other state or nation, as Wisconsin cheeses claimed 73 awards at the 2010 World Cheese Championships.

Diversity keeps Wisconsin's dairy industry thriving. Our state needs farms of all shapes and sizes to be successful from managed grazing to conventional methods to using the newest technology. Wisconsin ranks first in the number of dairy farms, leads the nation in organic dairy farms, and has more dairy goats and sheep than any other state.

Dairy farmers are still trying to recover from the disastrous prices of 2009 and are also feeling the challenges of high input prices of feed, fuel, and fertilizers. I thank you for your persistence through the difficult times and for continuing to look towards the future.

The dairy industry in Wisconsin is poised to grow because of the committed individuals, businesses and support that our state provides. Nearly 60 percent of processors plan on increasing their production volume in the next five years and plan to invest almost \$1 billion over that time in equipment and facilities. When surveyed, 24 percent of Wisconsin dairy producers intend to increase their herd size by 2012.

In the 1930's, Wisconsin officially became known as America's Dairyland. Wisconsin will continue to be America's Dairyland for years to come as we make our state a place where dairy cows can be productive, dairy producers profitable, and our dairy businesses competitive. So this June Dairy Month, show your appreciation to the state's great dairy farms and taste the Wisconsin dairy difference.

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